

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SAB-01 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01

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O R 241358Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5996

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BERT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 1701

E O 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, US, XF

SUBJECT: ISRAELI PRESS ON BREAKDOWN OF TALKS, PRESIDENT FORD'S
MESSAGE AND FUTURE OF US-ISRAELI RELATIONS

SUMMARY: ALL ISRAELI NEWSPAPERS REPORT ON PRESIDENT FORD'S
MESSAGE TO GOI. PRESS ALSO SPECULATES ON FUTURE RELATIONS
BETWEEN ISRAEL AND US FOLLOWING SUSPENSION OF TALKS. WHILE
NO ISRAELI OFFICIAL WAS PREPARED TO COMMENT ON OR REVEAL
CONTENTS OF PRESIDENT FORD'S MESSAGE TO GOI, PRESS CITE
"EXCERPTS" FROM MESSAGE AND REFER TO IT AS "SHARP" AND
AND "THREATENING". END SUMMARY.

1. MAARIV (MAR23) HEADLINE STORY WAS REPORTED YESTERDAY IN
JERUSALEM 0688. MAARIV EDITORIAL TODAY
PREDICTS THAT AS RESULT OF SUSPENSION OF TALKS, A PERIOD
OF TENSION WITH US LIES AHEAD. ISRAEL, MAARIV NOTES,
MUST BE PREPARED FOR SUCH A POSSIBILITY. "GOI MUST PRE-
PARE WITHOUT ANY DELAY FOR A POLITICAL AND INFO
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CAMPAING... TO MEET UNWELCOME DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL

ARENA AND IN US IN PARTICULAR."

2. YEDIOT (MAR 23) FRONTPAGE STORY ALSO REPORTS ON PRESIDENT FORD'S MESSAGE "WHICH REMINDED RABIN AND HIS MINISTERS OF PRESSURE EXERTED ON ISRAEL BY US AND USSR IN 1956 TO WITHDRAW FROM SINAI. MINISTERS CONCLUDED FROM MESSAGE THAT PRESIDENT IS BLAMING ISRAEL FOR FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS..." MINISTERS EXPRESSED FEAR THAT COLLAPSE OF TALKS..." WILL CAUSE A WORSENING IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND US... CONTENTS OF MESSAGE ASTONISHED MINISTERS... IT IS THOUGHT THAT MESSAGE WAS INVITED BY KISSINGER..."

3. DAVAR HEADLINES STORY (MAR 24 -- ESHED) REPORTS THAT DESPITE SEVERE CONTENTS OF MESSAGE SENT BY PRESIDENT FORD TO RABIN, KISSINGER IMMEDIATELY EXPLAINED THAT MESSAGE MUST NOT BE REGARDED AS A THREAT. ACCORDING TO ESHED, MESSAGE SAID, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT "US WILL NOT FINANCE A SITUATION OF DEADLOCK WHICH WILL STAND CONTRARY TO ITS POLITICAL INTERESTS." THIS COULD BE INTERPRETED "AS A DESCRIPTION OF HYPOTHETICAL POSSIBILITY, BUT ALSO AS AN IMPLIED THREAT TO STOP AID TO ISRAEL IF IT WON'T SIGN AN INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT..."

4. SOME WASHINGTON BASED ISRAELI REPORTERS "AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES" (SEE SEPTEL FOR JERUSALEM POST STORY) AS SAYING THAT "MESSAGES SENT BY PRESIDENT FORD TO SADAT WERE DRAFTED FAR MORE MODERATELY. DRAFTING OF MESSAGE TO RABIN WAS DEFINED AS 'POOR AND UNPROFESSIONAL' AND EVALUATION IS THAT KISSINGER HAD REQUESTED PRESIDENT TO SEND MESSAGE-- BUT HE (KISSINGER) DID NOT DRAFT IT... ADMINISTRATION AND ALSO ISRAELI SOURCES IN WASHINGTON MADE YESTERDAY CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE IMPORTANCE OF MESSAGE EMPHASIZING THAT IT WAS NOT INTENDED TO BLAME ISRAEL FOR FAILURE BUT TO TRY AND INFLUENCE IT IN A CRITICAL MOMENT IN TALKS. IT WAS EMPHASIZED THAT BOTH FORD AND KISSINGER AND THEIR SPOKESMEN STRICTLY REFRAINED FROM BLAMING ONE OF THE SIDES FOR THE FAILURE OF TALKS..." (DAVAR--BARNEA)

5. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS SPECULATE ON US-ISRAEL RELATIONS
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FOLLOWING SUSPENSION OF TALKS... PRESS URGES AN INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN IN THE US TO EXPLAIN ISRAELI POSITION. HAARETZ (GOLAN) QUOTES SENIOR GOVT ELEMENTS AS SAYING THAT AIM OF PRESIDENT SADAT FROM OUTSET WAS TO CAUSE A RIFT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND US AND NOT TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL..." DESCRIBING SADAT'S POSITION DURING TALKS, OFFICIALS CONCLUDE THAT "SADAT AGREED TO HOLD TALKS ASSUMING THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO AGREE TO HIS DEMANDS AND THIS WOULD LEAD TO

A DISRUPTION IN US-ISRAEL RELATIONS.." AS FOR FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND US, "NO CONCLUSIONS MUST BE DRAWN FROM FORD'S MESSAGE..." OFFICIALS ADD. " IT IS NECESSARY TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN EXPRESSIONS INTENDED TO INFLUENCE TREND OF TALKS AND RANGE OF RELATIONS AND IDENTITY OF INTERETS. BASICALLY, GOVT ELEMENTS CLAIM, NO BASIC CHANGE HAS TAKEN PLACE IN US-ISRAEL RELATIONS WHICH ARE BASED ON AN IDENTITY OF INTERESTS AND LONG FRIENDSHIP..." US MAY DELAY DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC AID TO ISRAEL " BUT IT IS NOT ASSUMED THAT THIS INCONVENIENCE WILL GO AS FAR AS HARMING THE BASIC NEEDS OF ISRAEL AND ITS ABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF..."

6. A SIMILAR TONE IS ADOPTED BY DAVAR (ESHED) WRITING THAT "SUSPENSION OF LISSINGER'S PEACE MISSION SHOULD NOT INEVITABLY LEAD TO THE CONCLUSION THAT CRISIS IN US-ISRAEL RELATIONS IS EXPECTED..." ESHED ADVOCATES CONCEN- TRATING ON AN INFO CAMPAIGN NOW: HE CONCEDES THAT "NO DOUBT PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER WILL BE DISAPPOINTED WITH ISRAEL TO SOME EXTENT, BUT BOTH THEY AND AMERICAN AND WORLD OPINION MAY SHOW APPRECIATION OF ISRAEL'S COURAGE FOR DEFENDING ITSELF AND TAKING RISKS. THIS APPRECIATION WILL DEPEND TO A LARGE EXTENT ON ISRAEL'S SUCCESS IN EXPOSING EGYPT'S BEHAVIOR DURING RECENT TALKS..."

7. MAARIV AND YEDIOT (MAR 24) REPORT IN FRONTPAGE STORIES THAT "A CAMPAIGN FOR ISRAEL" WILL BE CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT US TO PROVE EGYPT'S FAULT IN FAILING THE TALKS. THIS CAMPAIGN WILL BE CONDUCTED BY US JEWISH LEADERS BUT ISRAELI LEADERS MAY ALSO VISIT US.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TELAV01701
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750102-0466
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750320/aaaaascu.tel
Line Count: 146
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hartledg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 JUN 2003 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2004 by hartledg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI PRESS ON BREAKDOWN OF TALKS, PRESIDENT FORD'S MESSAGE AND FUTURE OF US-ISRAELI RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, IS, US, XF, (FORD, GERALD R)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006